

NEWS from

The Savannah River Site



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For immediate release

EMERGENCY EXERCISE AROUND SRS TO HAVE NATIONAL CAST

AIKEN, S.C. (April 17)—An extensive exercise planned for April 23-25 in the Central Savannah River Area will test the emergency response capabilities of local and state emergency management organizations, as well as those of nearby states and several federal agencies.

The exercise is designed to test responses to a potential radiological contamination of the “ingestion pathway” – the term used when radiological contamination may affect crops, gardens, water resources, farm animals and livestock feed.

One purpose of the exercise is to test the readiness of the Federal Radiological Monitoring and Assessment Center (FRMAC) to respond to an event at the Department of Energy’s Savannah River Site. The FRMAC is DOE’s National Nuclear Security Administration organization based in Nevada that supports federal, state and county agencies in responding to radiological events. SRS itself will also use this exercise as a test of its own emergency response organization.

The triggering event for the exercise scenario will be a hypothetical earthquake causing a release of radioactive material from SRS. The amount of the release is exaggerated in the scenario to levels that enable the federal assets to be deployed.

Responses to the event over the course of the three-day exercise will involve, and require coordination among, the following agencies (at minimum):

- Emergency Operation Centers in Georgia and South Carolina.
- Aiken County (SC) Emergency Services.
- Barnwell County (SC) Emergency Management.
- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control.
- South Carolina Emergency Management Division.
- Georgia Emergency Management Agency.
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division.
- Georgia Department of Agriculture.
- University of Georgia, Cooperative Extension Service.
- Staff from members of the Southern Mutual Radiological Assistance Plan, which comprises the states of Alabama, Florida, and North Carolina in addition to Georgia and South Carolina.

(more)

- The Advisory Team for Environment, Food and Health (A-Team) members, co-located in the FRMAC, include the U.S. Department of Agriculture (from Washington D.C.), the U.S. Public Health Service (Atlanta), and the Environmental Protection Agency (Montgomery, Alabama). The Federal Emergency Management Agency and State representatives will also participate in the A-Team's activities.
- Units of the Department of Energy. This includes headquarters participation; deployment of aircraft of the Aerial Measuring System from Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland; regional Radiological Assistance Plan teams; staff from DOE-Nevada and Bechtel-Nevada; the Radiological Emergency Assistance Center/Training Site in Oak Ridge, Tenn.; and the Atmospheric Release Advisory Capability in California. It also naturally includes operations at SRS.

Numerous emergency response crews and vehicles may be visible in any of the counties surrounding SRS during the three days as part of the exercise; residents need not be alarmed. There is no danger to the public. Exercise activities will halt overnight during the exercise. The exercise will conclude at about noon on April 25.

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